

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 0575

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FOR SPIEGEL

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: OVIP (VANCE CYRUS), TU, CY

SUBJ: UNCLEARED DRAFT TELEGRAM OF SECRETARY'S CONVERSATION WITH
ECEVIT CONCERNING CYPRUS MISSING PERSONS

1. DURING COURSE OF CONVERSATION WITH PRIME MINISTER ECEVIT JANUARY 21, THE SECRETARY ASKED ABOUT THE CURRENT STATUS OF EFFORTS TO FORM A CYPRUS MISSIONS PERSONS COMMITTEE. INSTEAD OF RESPONDING DIRECTLY, ECEVIT ASKED MFA DIRGEN OF CYPRUS/ GREEK AFFAIRS TULUMEN TO RESPONDED. TULUMEN SAID THE STATUS WAS AS IT HAD BEEN DESCRIBED TO AMBASSADOR CRAWFORD BY TURKISH CYPRIOT LEADER DENKTASH A FEW DAYS EARLIER. HE THEN RECOUNTED THE TURKISH VERSION OF RECENT NEGOTIATIONS AND CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT WHEN THE TURKS AND TURKISH-CYPRIOTS HAD ACCEPTED REVISION THREE OF THE DRAFT AGREEMENT, THEY HAD UNDERSTOOD IT ALSO TO HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED AD REFERENDUM BY THE GREEK CYPRIOTS. WHEN THE GREEK-CYPRIOTS HAD THEN DEMANDED FURTHER CHANGES, TURKEY HAD SIMPLY BEEN UNABLE TO ACCOMMODATE THESE CHANGES. IT HAD DONE THE BEST THAT IT COULD DO.

2. ECEVIT THEN TOOK OVER THE DISCUSSION AND OBSERVED THE TURKEY HAD FREQUENTLY EXPERIENCED THE PROBLEM OF
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GREEK-CYPRIOT BACKTRACKING FROM AN AGREEMENT ONCE REACHED. HE RECALLED THAT IN THE TALKS BETWEEN DENKTASH AND MARKARIOS LAST YEAR, MAKARIOUS HAD ADMITTED THAT LESS THEN THIRTY PERSONS WERE REALLY MISSING. ECEVIT SAID HE RECOGNIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ISSUE FROM A HUMANITARIAN POINT OF VIEW, BUT A MAJOR PROBLEM WAS THAT THE EXHUMATION

OF BODIES AND OTHER REMINDERS OF OLD SCORES TO BE SETTLED WOULD CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH THE INTERCOMMUNAL TALKS COULD NOT PROSPER. HE SAID THAT SUCH AN EFFECT HAD BEEN DEMONSTRATED THREE YEARS AGO WHEN TURKISH TELEVISION HAD SHOWN A FILM OF THE EX-HUMATION OF TURKISH-CYPRIOT VILLAGES THAT HAD BEEN "BURIED ALIVE." THE GREEK-CYPRIOTS, ECEVIT SAID, WANTED THE INTERCOMMUNAL TALKS TO BOG DOWN, WANTED THE ISSUE STALEMATED AND WANTED TO TURST TO TIME. HE SAID HE BELIEVED THAT THE MISSING PERSONS PROBLEM SHOULD BE ADDRESSED AFTER SUCCESSFUL INTERCOMMUNAL TALKS AND NOT BEFORE WHEN THE RESULT WOULD BE TO MAKE IT PSYCHOLOGICALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO HOLD INTERCOMMUNAL TALKS. IN RESPONSE TO THE SECRETARY'S QUESTION, ECEVIT DID AGREE THAT THE MISSING PERSONS PROBLEM SHOULD BE SETTLED.

3. TULUMEN THEN BROUGHT UP THE SUBJECT OF DECISION-MAKING, ARGUING THAT MAJORITY RULE WOULD FAVOR THE GREEK-CYPRIOTS AND THAT FOR THIS REASON DECISIONS OF THE COMMITTEE SHOULD BE TAKEN BY CONSENSUS. THE SECRETARY IN RESPONSE SAID THAT IT MUST BE POSSIBLE TO FIND SOME WAY AROUND THAT DIFFICULTY.

4. ECEVIT THEN INTERJECTED THAT WHEN UNSYG WALDHEIM WAS IN ANKARA "HE DID NOT EVEN MENTION THIS PROBLEM".
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HE SAID IT WAS ONLY AFTER WALDHEIM HAD ARRIVED IN NICOSIA AND HAD TALKED TO THE GREEK-CYPRIOTS THAT HE MENTIONED IT.

5. RETURNING TO THE SUBJECT OF VOTING PROCEDURES, AMBASSADOR SPIERS POINTED OUT THAT THE ICRC HAD TOLD THE U.S.--AND THAT TURKEY HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO VERIFY--THAT ITS POSITION WAS THAT IT WOULD NOT FOLLOW A MAJORITY RULE PROCEDURE BUT WOULD INSIST ON CONSENSUS. HE SAID THAT THIS POSITION COULD BE USED TO DISPOSE OF THE VOTING PROCEDURE PROBLEM.

6. MFA SECGEN ELEKDAG ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IF THE MISSING PERSONS ISSUE WERE NOT SETTLED, IT WOULD CONTINUE TO HAUNT THEM. HE MAINTAINED, HOWEVER, THAT THE TURKS HAD MADE A GOOD WILL EFFORT WHEN IT HAD ACCEPTED REVISION THREE OF THE DRAFT AGREEMENT. HE SAID THAT ACCEPTANCE OF THAT DOCUMENT HAD BEEN BASED ON ASSURANCES GIVEN BY AMBASSADOR MEZVINSKY THAT IT HAD ALSO BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GREEK-CYPRIOTS. WHEN THE GREEK-CYPRIOTS THEN DEMANDED FURTHER CHANGES, THE TURKS HAD BEEN FORCED TO CONCLUDE

"THEY JUST WANT TO OPEN THE TOMBS AGAIN".

7. THE SECRETARY SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THE DIFFICULTIES THAT THE TURKS WERE FACING, BUT HE ALSO UNDERSTOOD THE MISCHIEF THAT COULD BE MADE OUT OF THE ISSUE. ECEVIT RESPONDED THAT THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT HAD TAKEN STEPS TOWARD AN OVERALL CYPRUS SOLUTION AND THAT THERE WAS NO TIME TO LOSE. IF THEY BECAME CONVINCED THAT THE GREEK-CYPRIOIS WERE TRYING TO DELAY A SOLUTION, THE TURKS AND TURKISH-CYPRIOIS WOULD LOOK FOR ANOTHER WAY OUT. THE TURKISH-CYPRIOIS COULD NOT CONTINUE UNDER THEIR PRESENT CONDITIONS.

8. COMMENT: WHILE THIS DISCUSSION DID NOT BRING
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THE MISSING PERSONS ISSUE ANY CLOSER TO SOLUTION, IT DID PROBIDE US WITH SOME FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT TURKISH ATTITUDES. FROM THE TONE OF THE CONVERSATION IT WAS APPARENT THAT ECEVIT WAS FULLY FAMILIAR WITH THE MISSING PERSONS PROBLEM AND THE STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS. SIMILARLY, IT WAS CLEAR THAT HE HAS DECIDED THAT PROGRESS ON MISSING PERSONS MUST FOLLOW AND NOT PRECEDE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF THE INTERCOMMUNAL TALKS. IT WAS ALSO CLEAR THAT THERE WAS NO DIFFERENCE OF VIEWS BETWEEN ECEVIT AND MFA OFFICIALS WHO HAVE BEEN DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM. ANOTHER ITEM OF NOTE WAS ECVIT'S FLAT STATEMENT THAT WALDHEIM HAD NOT RAISED THE SUBJECT WHILE HE WAS IN ANKARA CONTRARY TO INFORMATION PROVIDED EMBASSY NICOSIA BY REMY GORGE (NICOSIA 0123). WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE REACHED A TOTAL DEADLOCK IN THE EFFORT TO FORM A MISSING PERSONS COMMITTEE, AND IN FACT, WE STORNGLY RECOMMENN THAT EFFORTS CONTINUE IN VIEW OF THE POTENTIAL FOR DESTRUCTIVE DEBATE AT THE UPCOMING UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING. NEVERTHELESS, ECEVIT'S COMMENTS DO NOT GIVE US MUCH ROOM FOR HOPE THAT THE TURKS WILL OVERCOME THEIR DOUBTS ABOUT GREEK CYPRIOT MOTIVES SOON ENOUGHT TO HEAD OFF A FULL AIRING OF THE ISSUE IN GENEVA.

9. WHEN CLEARED REQUEST DEPARTMENT PASS FOR INFO TO EMBASSY ATHENS, NICOSIA, US MISSION USUN AND US MISSION GENEVA.
SPIERS

NOTE: MESSAGE ANKARA 0575 UPGRADED TO NODIS, PER STATE 017362/S/S-O JETOBIN
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